Claims

[c1]   1.A system for remotely accessing an internet connection having a dynamic IP address, the system comprising:

an internet appliance coupled to an internet connection;

a dynamic IP relay hardware device coupled with said internet appliance and said internet connection;

said device being configured to report to a remote user, via said internet connection, a dynamic IP address associated with said internet connection; and,

said dynamic IP relay hardware is not a general purpose personal computer.

[c2]   2.A system of claim 1 wherein said dynamic IP relay hardware comprises a microprocessor and software executed by said microprocessor which, in combination, are configured to generate a report of an IP address for said internet connection in response to an occurrence of a predetermined event.

[c3]   3.A system of claim 2 wherein said predetermined event comprises a passage of a predetermined amount of time.

[c4]   4.A system of claim 2 wherein said predetermined event comprises a determination, at least in part, by monitoring software, that a dynamic IP address for said internet connection has been changed.

[c5]   5.A system of claim 2 wherein said report is configurable in response to a particular configuration state of configuration software executed by said microprocessor.

[c6]   6.A system of claim 5 wherein said configuration software is configured to provide for configuration thereof by a device external to said dynamic IP relay hardware device.

[c7]   7.A system of claim 2 wherein said dynamic IP relay hardware device comprises a printed circuit board disposed in a case housing other electronic hardware coupled to a computer network.

[c8]   8.A system of claim 2 wherein said microprocessor assists in initiating a dial-up internet connection in response to an incoming telephone call.

[c9]   9.A system of claim 8 wherein a security procedure is completed prior to initiating said dial-up internet connection.

[c10]   10.A system of claim 9 wherein said security procedure comprises matching incoming information with predetermined information.

[c11]   11.A system of claim 10 wherein said incoming information comprises a series of DTMF tones.

[c12]   12.A system of claim 10 wherein said incoming information comprises caller ID information.

[c13]   13.A system of claim 12 wherein said dynamic IP relay hardware device comprises a stand-alone device which is not completely housed within a case containing a modem.

[c14]   14.A system of claim 12 wherein said dynamic IP relay hardware device comprises a stand-alone device which is not completely housed within a case containing a router.

[c15]   15.A method of remotely accessing an internet appliance comprising the steps of:
            providing an electronic hardware device which is not a general purpose personal computer;
            using said electronic hardware device to generate a report of an IP address for an internet connection, in response to an occurrence of a predetermined event;
            using said electronic hardware device to communicate said report to a remote user via said internet connection; and
            using said IP address to remotely access said internet connection.

[c16]   16.A method of claim 15 further comprising the step of:
            determining if a change in IP-address has occurred with respect to said internet connection.

[c17]   17.A method of claim 15 wherein said report comprises an e-mail.

[c18]
            18.A method of claim 17 further comprising the steps of:

answering an incoming telephone call;

receiving incoming authorization information during said incoming telephone call;

matching said incoming authorization information to predetermined authorization information;

initiating a dial-up connection in response to said step of matching said incoming authorization information to predetermined authorization information; and

wherein said dial-up connection comprises said internet connection.

[c19]   19.A method of claim 18 further comprising the steps of:

configuring said report via a personal computer coupled to said electronic hardware device.

[c20]   20.A system for accessing information from an unattended internet appliance via an internet connection having dynamic IP addresses comprising:

an unattended internet appliance;

a telephone modem disposed between and interconnecting said unattended internet appliance with a remote user via a dial-up internet connection;

a stand-alone electronic hardware device which is not a general purpose personal computer and which is further not disposed in a case with a device which is configured for communicating information across a computer network;

said stand-alone electronic hardware device comprising a microprocessor and memory which is configured to store software therein which is executed by said microprocessor;

said stand-alone electronic hardware device being configured to receive report configuration commands from an external personal computer;

said microprocessor and said software together configured to initiate said dial-up internet connection in response to an incoming telephone call which authorizes said dial-up internet connection only after incoming information is matched to predetermined authorization information; and,

said microprocessor and said software together further configured to generate an e-mail report indicating a current IP address for said dial-up internet connection, where said e-mail report is in response to said report configuration

commands.

[c21]   21.A method of testing a configuration of an internet appliance comprising the steps of:

providing an electronic hardware device which is not a general purpose personal computer;

using said electronic hardware device to generate a report of an IP address for an internet connection, in response to an occurrence of a predetermined event;

using said electronic hardware device to communicate said report to a remote user via said internet connection; and

using said IP address to test a configuration.

[c22]   22.A system for remotely accessing an internet connection having a dynamic IP address, the system comprising:

a dynamic IP relay hardware device coupled to said internet connection;

a device being configured to report to a remote user, via said internet connection, a dynamic IP address associated with said internet connection; and,

said dynamic IP relay hardware is not a general purpose personal computer.

[c23]   23.A system of claim 22 wherein said dynamic IP relay hardware comprises a microprocessor and software executed by said microprocessor which, in combination, are configured to generate a report of an IP address for said internet connection in response to an occurrence of a predetermined event.